

cots

SAFETY FOR KIDS
in the home 



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Your baby will spend much of his or her first years in a cot, so it's very important that you choose a cot that is safe

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8. Are there any footholds that allow your child to climb?

Most cot injuries occur when kids climb out and fall so don't allow the cot to give them a helping hand (eg horizontal bars and ornamentation provide footholds).

9. Does the cot have castors or wheels?

If the cot has four castors, at least two must be fitted with brakes. This is a sensible precaution because children can sometimes move a cot into a dangerous location if it is on wheels.

10. Is there a mattress with the cot?

A mattress should fit snugly into the base of a cot with no gaps more than 20mm wide. If the mattress is not a snug fit, there is a real risk of suffocation to very young infants due to them falling down into the gap.

When the cot base is at the lowest setting, with the drop side up, there must be 500mm between the top of the mattress and the top rail.

11. Are there instructions or safety warnings supplied with the cot?

When you buy a new cot, you should get a simple leaflet on all the correct assembly and safety guides. The cot should also have a tag which states the recommended mattress size. A cot should also have the name and address of the manufacturer for your future reference.

If you're in the business of selling cots

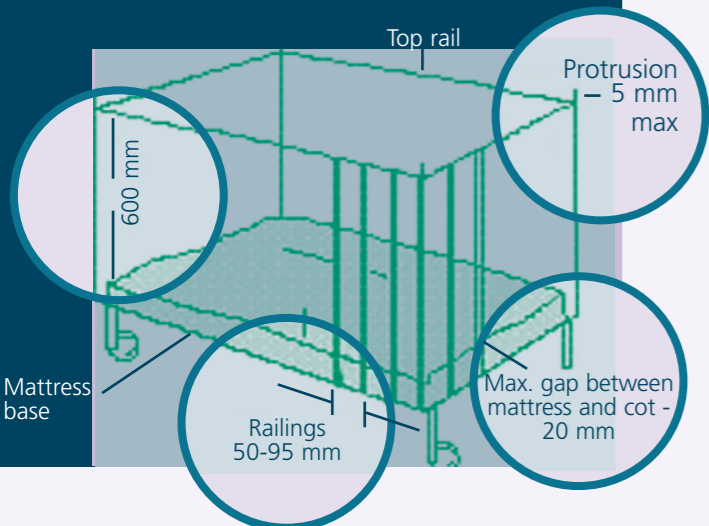
If you sell cots, you should be aware of the mandatory standard. If you sell cots that don't comply with the standard, you could be prosecuted.

The standard applies to all new and second-hand cot sales and also cot hire. If you are selling older style cots, double check that they meet the mandatory standards.

The standard doesn't apply to portable cots, carry cots and rocking cradles.



Your baby will spend much of his or her first years in a cot, so it's very important that you choose a cot that is safe. Then, when you get it home, it's vital that you follow some basic rules on using the cot safely.



Second-hand cots

Many new parents are given used cots by friends or relatives. In these circumstances, parents need to examine the cot carefully to make sure it is safe.

Don't forget that cot standards are now more stringent – for very good reasons! Keep in mind too that old cots may be worn or even broken. Second-hand cots can be perfectly good, but check them carefully before using them.

The main risks with cots

Most injuries to young children are due to falls from cots. This brochure will tell you how to prevent children climbing out of their cots.

Children can also be hurt or killed when their head, arms or legs become stuck between the railings or dropsides, or their clothing snags on protruding parts.

Tips for cot safety at home

- ◆ Never place a cot under a window, because of the strangulation danger posed by curtain cords. Easily-accessible window ledges also make it easier for children to climb out of their cots.
- ◆ Similarly, keep cots well away from heaters and electrical plugs to prevent burns, fire and electric shock.
- ◆ Don't put cushions, bumpers or large toys in cots because these provide children with "steps" to help them climb out.
- ◆ Choking is a risk. Don't leave small objects on or near the cot. As a rule of thumb, if an object will fit entirely into a 35mm film canister, it is a choking hazard.
- ◆ Never use an electric blanket or hot water bottle in your baby's cot.
- ◆ Don't hang pictures or mirrors over your baby's cot as they can, and often do, fall.
- ◆ Adjustable bases on cots should be moved to their lowest setting once your baby starts to roll.
- ◆ Don't suspend mobiles above cots or leave children with toys that have long cords. These present a real strangulation risk.
- ◆ If the cot breaks during use, it should be mended immediately or taken out of use. It's not worth the risk of injury to your child.

Any cot sold in Western Australia must comply with the mandatory elements of the Australian/New Zealand Safety Standard for Children's Cots (AS/NZS 2172 Cots for Household Use). For more information on this mandatory safety standard, or to obtain a copy, ring Standards Australia on 13 12 42.

Safety checklist

11 point cot safety checklist

This checklist provides a quick reference for assessing cot safety.

1. Does the cot comply with the mandatory safety standard?

An indication of whether a cot meets the mandatory safety standard is the presence of the Standards Australia logo. Ask the seller if the cot complies.

2. Is the cot in good condition?

If you're buying a wooden cot, check its overall stability and that all rails and base slats are intact and not splintered.

If the cot is metal, make sure that rails and bars are not bent or out of shape, and do not have sharp edges.

3. Does the cot meet the dimensions set down in the mandatory standard?

Having a safe gap-width in the cot structure reduces the risk of children becoming trapped.

- ◆ **Finger traps** – there should be no spaces between 5mm and 12mm wide.
- ◆ **Arm and leg traps** – there should be no spaces between 30mm and 50mm.
- ◆ **Railings** – should be no less than 50mm and no more than 95mm wide.
- ◆ **Head traps and "fall-through" hazards** – there should be no spaces 95mm or wider.
- ◆ **Protrusions** – there should be no protrusions that jut out more than 5mm. Clothing can get snagged on knobs, decorative features, wing nuts, side-catches, etc and cause distress or strangulation.

4. Is the base of the cot adjustable?

There must be no more than two heights for the base of the cot. When the base is at the high setting with the dropside up, there must not be less than 400mm between the top of the mattress base and the top rail. When the base is at the low setting with the dropside up, there must not be less than 600mm between the top of the mattress base and the top rail.

5. Does the cot have dropsides?

- ◆ Ensure the catches lock into place properly.
- ◆ The cot should be designed so it has:
 - two fastening devices separated by a distance of at least 850mm that have to operate simultaneously; or
 - a system that requires at least two separate but simultaneous actions operating on different principles; or
 - a system that requires at least two consecutive actions operating on different principles; or
 - the access fastening device is inaccessible to the child within the cot.
- ◆ Ensure the dropside is firmly attached to the cot and operates smoothly.

6. Are the edges of the cot smooth and rounded with nothing protruding?

This helps prevent injuries from sharp objects and your child's clothing from snagging on protrusions. Refer to point 2 on this checklist.

7. Is the cot sturdy?

Give the cot a quick shake and make sure the sides, ends and base don't feel unstable.